

# Report and Recommendations on the Status of Graduate Students

Prepared for

The Executive Committee of the  
Conference on College Composition and Communication

By

The Committee on the Status of Graduate Students  
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## Executive Summary

The CCCC Executive Committee has charged the Committee on the Status of Graduate Students with gathering information about the needs of graduate students in the field, identifying concerns that should be brought to the attention of the CCCC Officers and Executive Committee, and recommending appropriate actions to the Officers of the Executive Committee. This report shares the results of an online survey of 621 current and recent graduate students conducted between October 17, 2013 and November 14, 2013. We close with recommendations based on the responses of participants.

The body of this report is divided into five sections sharing and explaining the results of the survey:

1. Who Took Our Survey: A Picture of Graduate Students in the Field
2. Respondents' Career Goals and Reasons for Going to Graduate School
3. What Resources Graduate Students Have Available: Other Professional Organizations and Professional Preparation for Conferences from Local Institutions
4. Graduate Students' Current Knowledge of CCCC, Its Leadership Structure, and Its Subcommittees
5. Support Graduate Students Need: Involvement in CCCC, Travel Funding Difficulties, Assistance on the Job Market, and Other Professional Development

## Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the results of the survey, we draw some general conclusions:

- Graduate students often have little support in finding and considering nonacademic jobs.
- The academic job market is mystifying and many graduate students have little mentorship at their institutions for navigating the market
- Graduate students have little understanding of the leadership and structure of CCCC, but are often eager to become involved and unsure how to do so.
- They desire mentorship and networking opportunities.
- We have little understanding of graduate student labor conditions across the field.

Based on these conclusions, this report recommends

1. Reconstituting the Committee on the Status of Graduate Students, with some additional charges, specifically researching labor conditions and developing a CCCC position statement on best practices for departments in providing professional development.
2. Continuing the work Joyce Carter has begun of making the proposal review process and leadership structure of CCCC more transparent. We specifically recommend an informational guide explaining the leadership structure of CCCC and involvement opportunities and making reviewer comments on proposals available to submitters.
3. Developing a workshop or other forum for support and professional development for the academic job market.
4. Formalizing mentoring and networking opportunities at the annual conference. This Committee has already begun work on a mentorship meet and greet.
5. Developing a workshop or other forum for supporting nonacademic careers and networking.

## Introduction

The CCCC Committee on the Status of Graduate Students has been charged with gathering information about the needs of graduate students in CCCC, identifying concerns that should be brought to the attention of the CCCC Officers and Executive Committee, and recommending appropriate actions to the Officers and Executive Committee. In order to meet this charge, the Committee on the Status of Graduate Students surveyed current and recent graduate students through an electronic survey. Between October 17, 2013, and November 14, 2013, 621 respondents completed the survey, which was circulated broadly through listservs and on social media sites like Facebook and Twitter.

This report provides the results of this survey and concludes with recommendations. The first section, “Who Took Our Survey,” provides information on respondents: what type of graduate students took the survey, what portions of respondents are members of CCCC or have attended CCCC, and demographic information.

The second section provides information on these graduate students’ career goals. Importantly, while careers in higher education remain a priority for graduate students, they are also keeping their options open and considering non-academic careers. Those who prefer work in higher education overwhelmingly desire tenure-track positions, but seem flexible in regards to the type of institution (e.g., research vs. liberal arts) they work for. Approximately half of graduate students who go on the academic job market plan to do so as an ABD; though many others have not yet decided if they will. Last, this section outlines the financial obligations graduate students will have upon completion of their degrees.

The third section discusses two professional resources graduate students already have available: their memberships in other professional organizations, as well their reasons for joining those organizations; and professional development related to conferences, like proposal-writing workshops and sessions on effective conference presentations.

The fourth section reveals just how little graduate students know about CCCC’s leadership structure, the Executive Committee, and its subcommittees. Roughly 70% of respondents felt they had little to no knowledge of many aspects of the Executive Committee and CCCC subcommittees, including the election process for the EC, the roles of these committees, the administrative structure of CCC, how proposals are judged and selected to be on the CCCC program, who subcommittees are responsible to and how membership is chosen, and even how caucuses and special interests groups function and how to become involved.

The fifth section of this report focuses more explicitly on graduate students’ stated needs and interests in potential opportunities with CCCC. The section opens with an overview of various opportunities that graduate students would be interested in, and then delves into 4 areas of graduate student needs: 1) travel funding, 2) assistance with the job market, 3) mentorship, and 4) graduate student labor conditions.

This report closes with a list of conclusions and recommendations. We summarize the findings of the report: Graduate students often have little support in finding and considering nonacademic jobs; the academic job market is mystifying and many graduate students have little mentorship at their institutions for navigating the market; graduate students have little understanding of the leadership and structure of CCCC, but are often

eager to become involved and unsure how to do so; they desire mentorship and networking opportunities; and we have little understanding of graduate student labor conditions across the field.

Based on these conclusions, this report recommends reconstituting the Committee on the Status of Graduate Students, with some additional charges, specifically researching labor conditions and developing a CCCC position statement on best practices for departments in providing professional development. We also recommend continuing the work Joyce Carter has begun of making the proposal review process more transparent. Additionally, we discuss recommendations for support for graduate students on the academic job market, recommendations regarding mentoring opportunities, and recommendations for support related to nonacademic careers.

## Who Took Our Survey: A Picture of Graduate Students in the Field

Of the 621 respondents, 513 were enrolled in a graduate program at that time, 104 claimed to have graduated or have an academic position (or both), 2 were applying to graduate programs, and 2 declined to answer. Table 1 represents respondents who are still in graduate school. Table 2 represents respondents who have completed graduate school (MA, MFA, or PhD) or hold an academic position.

**Table 1.** Types of graduate students who took the survey (N=513)

Type of Graduate Student	Number	Percent of All Respondents (621)
Current MA Graduate Student	140	22.5%
Current PhD Graduate Student	199	32.0%
Current PhD Candidate	166	26.7%
Current MFA Graduate Student	4	0.6%
Current MS Graduate Student	2	0.3%
Current EdD Graduate Student	1	0.2%
Provisional Graduate Student	1	0.2%

**Table 2.** Status of those who completed graduate school and took the survey (N=104)

Status	Number	Percent of All Respondents (621)
Recent MA graduate, no other information	15	2.4%
Recent MA graduate, adjunct or lecturer	3	0.5%
Recent PhD Graduate, no other information	41	6.6%
Recent MFA Graduate, no other information	1	0.2%
Recent graduate, not stated what degree	10	1.6%
Assistant Professor	24	3.9%
Full-time Faculty	5	0.8%
Lecturer	2	0.3%
Writing Center Director	1	0.2%
Post-Doc	2	0.3%

Table 3 represents the types of graduate programs our respondents were or are currently enrolled in. The majority (78.3%) of respondents were or are currently enrolled in programs that granted both MA and PhD degrees.

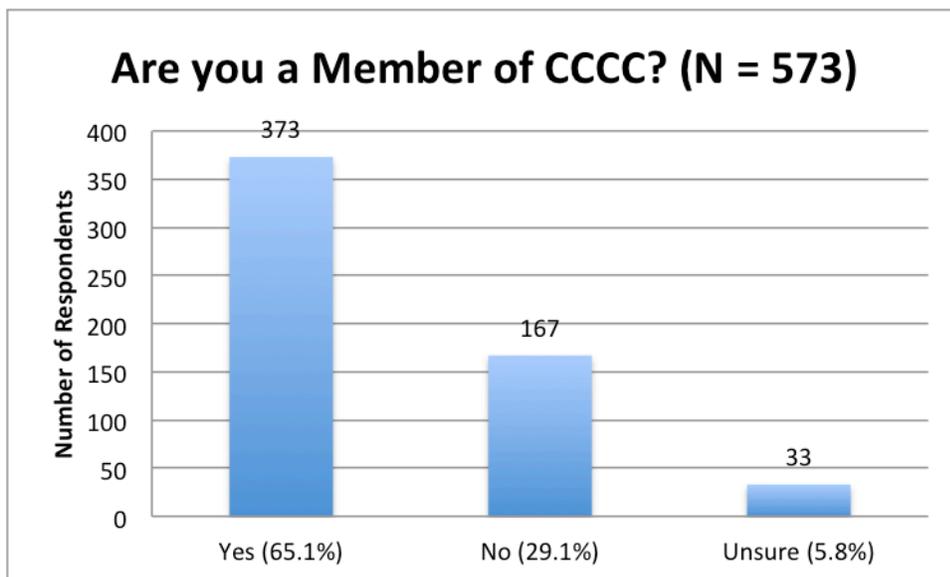
**Table 3.** Types of graduate program respondents were or currently are enrolled in (N=618)

Type of Graduate Program	Number	Percentage
MA and PhD granting	464	78.3%
MA-only granting	113	18.3%
PhD granting*	27	4.4%
MA and MFA granting*	5	0.8%
MFA granting*	4	0.6%
MS granting*	2	0.3%
EdD granting or MA and EdD granting*	2	0.3%

\* Self-reported answers

### CCCC Membership and Conference Attendance

Of 573 respondents, 65.1% were members of CCCC, 29.1% were not members, and 5.8% were unsure if they were members or not. Figure 1 represents CCCC membership of respondents.



**Figure 1.** Proportion of respondents who are members of CCCC (N=573)

Over half of our respondents have attended CCCC before, most of them as presenters. Roughly 1 out of 11 respondents has been accepted to present at CCCC before but did not present at the conference. One-third of respondents have never attended the conference or had a presentation accepted for the conference. Table

4 represents responses to the question of whether respondents have been accepted to present at CCCC, and whether they have attended or not.

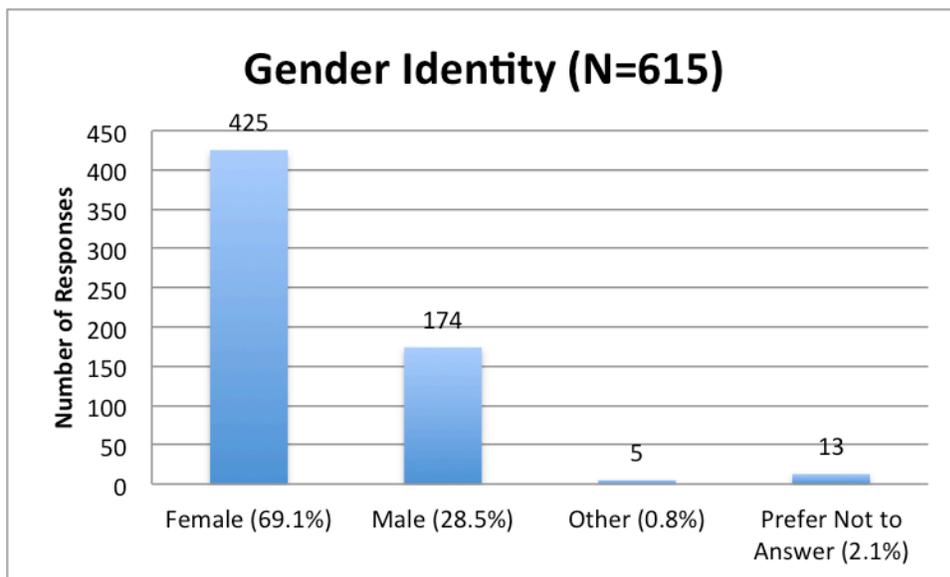
**Table 4.** Whether respondents have been accepted to present at, have presented at, or have attended CCCC (N=567)

Experience being accepted and presenting at CCCC	Number	Percent
Has been accepted and presented at the conference	278	49.0%
Has been accepted but did not present at the conference	48	8.5%
Has not been accepted, but has attended the the conference	52	9.2%
Has not been accepted and has not attended the conference	189	33.3%

### Demographic Information

Figures 2, 3, 4 and 5 and Table 5 represent demographic information about survey respondents. Our sample was majority female (69.1%) and white (79.7%). Nearly 1 in 7 identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender, and 5.8% identified as having a disability. Participants' ages ranged from 21 to over 51 years old, with the majority (55.3%) being between 26 and 35 years old.

Our survey participants over-represent the general United States population in terms of women and whiteness. Nationally, Americans are 12.6% African American, 4.8% Asian American, 0.9% Native Americans or Alaskan Native, 0.2% Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, 6.2% some other race, 2.9% multiracial, and 7.7% non-White Hispanic or Latino.<sup>1</sup> However, African Americans, Asian Americans, and non-White Hispanics or Latinos each represented less than 3% of our survey respondents.

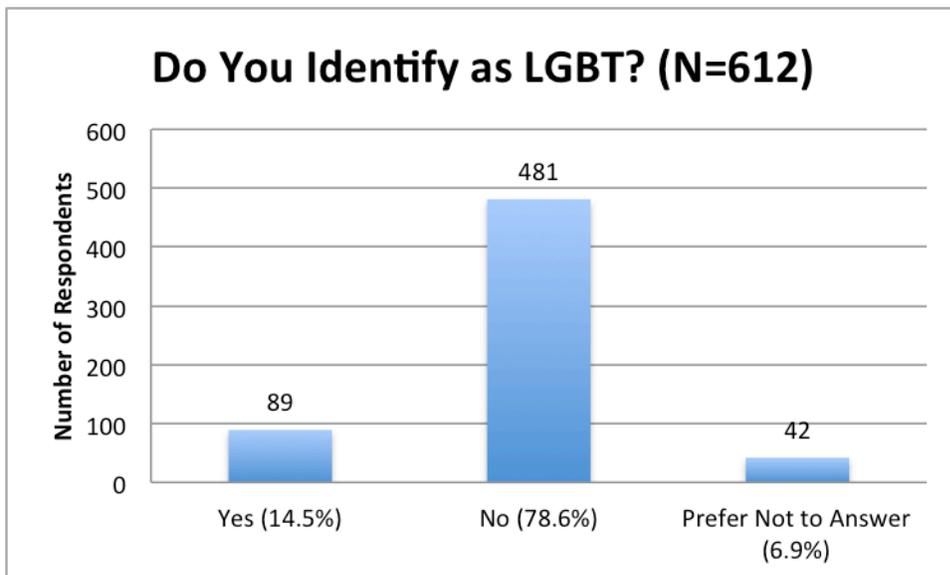


**Figure 2.** Gender identities of respondents (N=615)

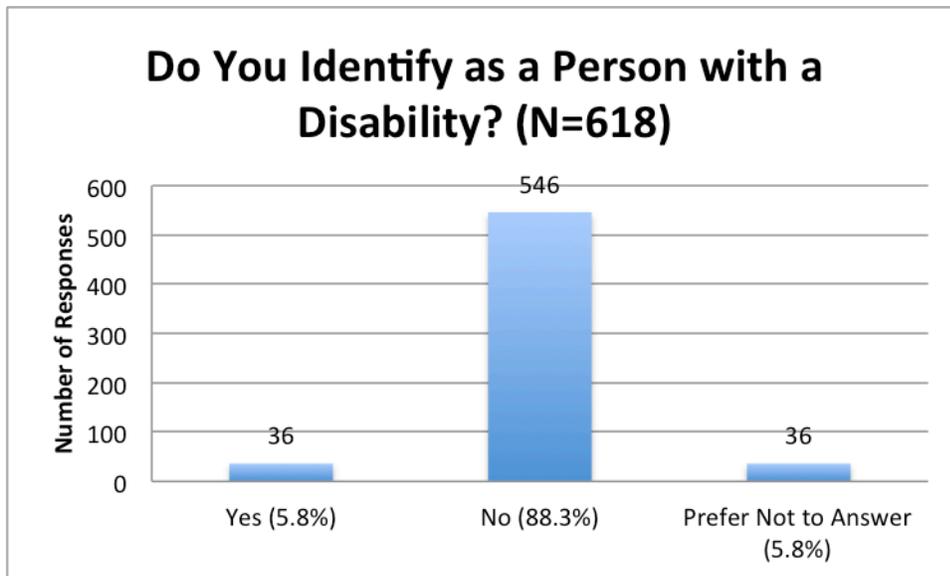
<sup>1</sup> United States Census Bureau. (2011). Overview of Race and Hispanic Origin: 2010. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-02.pdf>

**Table 5.** Racial or ethnic identities of respondents (N=617)

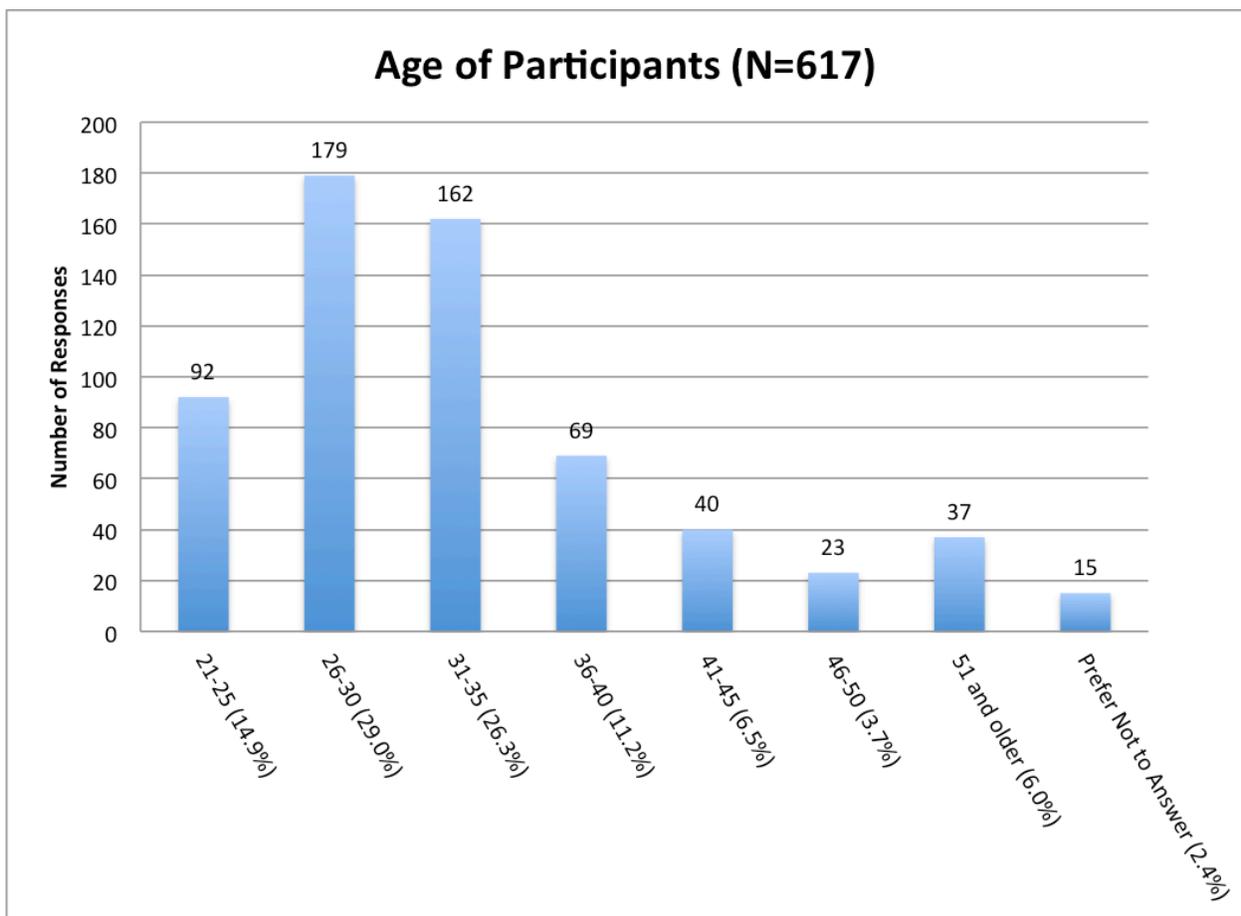
Racial or Ethnic Identity	Number	Percent of Respondents	National Census Percentage
Hispanic or Latino/a	11	1.8%	7.7% (Non-White Hispanic)
Hispanic or Latino/a <i>and</i> Black or African American	1	0.2%	
Hispanic or Latino/a <i>and</i> White	7	1.1%	8.7%
American Indian or Alaska Native	5	0.8%	0.9%
American Indian or Alaska Native <i>and</i> White	8	1.3%	0.5%
American Indian or Alaska Native <i>and</i> Other	1	0.2%	< 0.1%
Asian	12	1.9%	4.8%
Asian <i>and</i> White	5	0.8%	0.5%
Black or African American	14	2.3%	12.6%
Black or African American <i>and</i> White	2	0.3%	0.6%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1	0.2%	0.2%
White	492	79.7%	72.4%
More than Two Races	5	0.8%	0.2%
Other	16	2.6%	6.2%
Prefer Not to Answer	36	5.8%	--



**Figure 3.** Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) identities of respondents (N=612)



**Figure 4.** Disability-related identities of respondents (N=618)



**Figure 5.** Ages of respondents (N=617)

## Respondents' Career Goals and Reasons for Going to Graduate School

We asked respondents a series of questions related to their reasons for going to graduate school, their plans, and their career goals:

- What type of graduate degree (e.g., MA, PhD) do you plan to obtain, and why did you decide to pursue this graduate-level work?
- What would be your ideal job after completing your graduate degree?
- If your preferred job is within higher education, what are your priorities?
- If you are a PhD student, do you plan to go on the job market as an ABD (all-but-dissertation) candidate?
- What ongoing financial obligations will you have when you complete your graduate degree?
- How much student loan debt do you expect to have when you complete your graduate degree?

This section synthesizes and shares responses to these questions, organized around the following claims:

1. While careers in higher education remain a priority for graduate students, they are also keeping their options open and considering nonacademic careers.
2. Those who prefer to work in higher education jobs overwhelmingly desire tenure-track positions, but seem to be flexible in regards to type of institution. Two-fifths of respondents are interested in some type of administrative work in higher education.
3. Graduate students go to graduate school for a variety of reasons, including personal reasons like love of learning and research interests, professional reasons like wanting to teach, and economic reasons like job security or advancement.
4. Approximately half of graduate students who will go on the academic job market plan to do so as an ABD.
5. Graduate students will complete graduate school with a variety of financial obligations, and some with a high degree of student loan debt.

*While careers in higher education remain a priority for graduate students, they are also keeping their options open and considering nonacademic careers.*

While jobs in higher education remain a priority for graduate students (96.1% claimed higher education as a career ideal, though they could select multiple options), nonacademic jobs are also a priority for many. Participants selected positions in business or the corporate world (11.2%), government (12.8%), nonprofit sectors (18.8%), consulting (21.4%), or creative arts (16.9%) as ideal positions; another 7.4% selected entrepreneurship as an idea career area. This data is reflected in Table 6. Clearly, many graduate students selected multiple options, evidence that graduate students are leaving their options open for both academic and non-academic positions after graduation.

*Those who prefer to work in higher education jobs overwhelmingly desire tenure-track positions, but seem to be flexible in regards to type of institution. Two-fifths of respondents are interested in some type of administrative work in higher education.*

Those graduate students who were interested in a career in higher education expressed interest in tenure-track positions at either research institutions or liberal arts colleges in overwhelming numbers. Nearly one-third expressed interest in teaching at community colleges, and approximate two-fifths expressed interest in administrative positions, like being a WPA or running a writing center. About 13% expressed interest in non-tenured teaching. These results are displayed in Table 7. It's important to note that this particular question

had limitations: In the open-ended response portion of this question, some respondents noted that we did not list positions at regional state institutions and other types of institutions in our options.

**Table 6.** Ideal careers after graduation (N=538). Respondents could select multiple options.

Career area	Number	Percent
Higher education	517	96.1%
Secondary, middle, or elementary education	25	4.6%
Industry, business or corporation	60	11.2%
Industry, government	69	12.8%
Industry, nonprofit sector	101	18.8%
Entrepreneur, develop own business	40	7.4%
Consulting	115	21.4%
Creative	91	16.9%
Other (Alt-ac; Writing Center director/administration; Community organizing or outreach; Teaching English abroad; Editing; Publishing; Social media researcher; Adult education; Museum curating)	20	3.7%

**Table 7.** Position priorities for those whose preferred job is in higher education (N=521). Respondents could select multiple options.

Position	Number	Percent
Tenure track, research institution	305	58.5%
Tenure track, liberal arts college	375	72.0%
Community college, two-year college	165	31.7%
Non-tenure teaching	71	13.6%
Administrative, WPA, WAC, writing center, etc.	210	40.3%
Location-based priorities	135	25.9%
Other	30	5.8%

*Graduate students go to graduate school for a variety of reasons, including personal reasons like love of learning and research interests, professional reasons like wanting to teach, and economic reasons like job security or advancement.*

Sixty (60) respondents were planning to complete an MA and did not express interest in attaining a PhD (one of these was planning on getting a JD). Seven others were planning on ending their education with an MFA, and one was planning on completing an MS. Of these graduate students, 14 mention job security, career advancement, or other economic factors in deciding to earn their degree. Eight expressed interests in love of learning or being good at school. Another 31 stressed teaching, either deciding to work on their degree so

they could teach as a TA or earning their degree so they could teach at a community college or as an adjunct at a four-year institution after graduating. Other reasons given for earning an MA were working in a non-profit and idealistic reasons like "helping humanity."

The other 435 who responded to the question about why they attended graduate school had either finished their PhDs or were planning on earning their PhD. As with the MA students, PhD students expressed a mixture of personal edification and career goals as their motivation. Love of, or passion for, teaching, research, and scholarship were common themes in the responses. The vast majority expressed some sort of desire for an academic job. Twenty-nine (29) explicitly mentioned wanting to advance from an adjunct or non-tenure-track position; many of these stressed course loads, low income, or difficulty finding full-time employment. "Advancement," "personal satisfaction," and appreciation for the openness and flexibility of the field were other themes.

While the majority of responses were either matter-of-fact statements or hopeful in tone, there were a few negative responses worth mentioning:

*Honestly, I am not sure anymore why I pursued this.... Really, it's a disappointment. I also feel bogged down with competition as well as a lack of creativity in the field. I feel dull.*

*I am pursuing an MA. I had hoped to continue on to complete a PhD. The current state of academic labor, adjunct issues, and dismal job prospects in higher ed have led me to reevaluate my goals. I now plan to leave academia after completing my MA.*

*I initially thought it would be fun and that I'd go on to a PhD program and do the whole academia thing, but then I became disenchanted with the whole thing. At that point, I just finished in order to better my job prospects.*

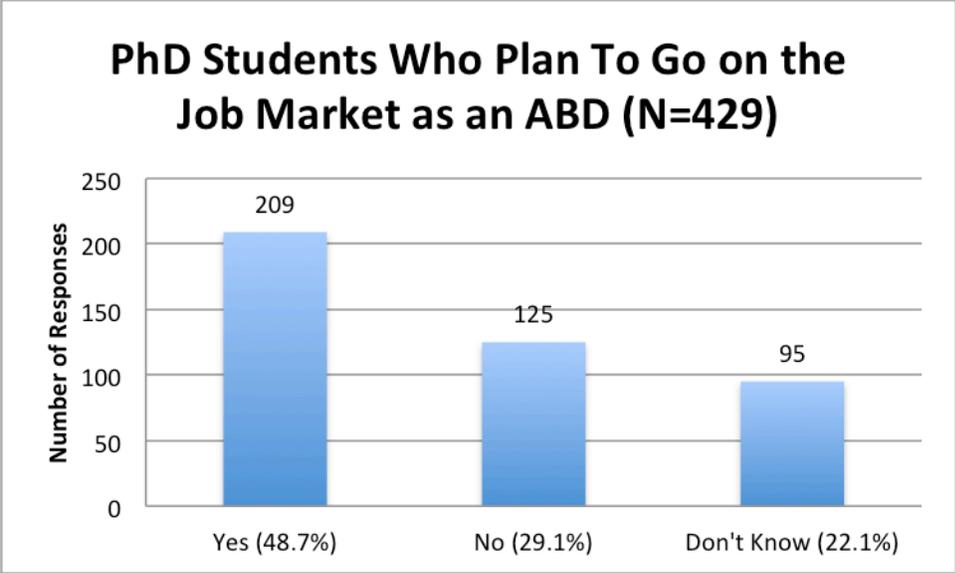
*Approximately half of graduate students who will go on the academic job market plan to do so as an ABD.*

Nearly half of respondents who plan on going on the academic job market reported that they plan on going on the academic job market as an ABD. Approximately one in five reported that they were unsure, meaning that somewhere between half and 70% of graduate students will likely go on the job market ABD. This data is shown in Figure 6.

*Graduate students will complete graduate school with a variety of financial obligations, and some with a high degree of student loan debt.*

Over half of respondents reported that they would complete graduate school with student loan debt, and approximately two-fifths reported they would have credit card debt. Other financial obligations include car payments, mortgages, and other loans. Table 8 represents graduate students' financial obligations upon completion of graduate school.

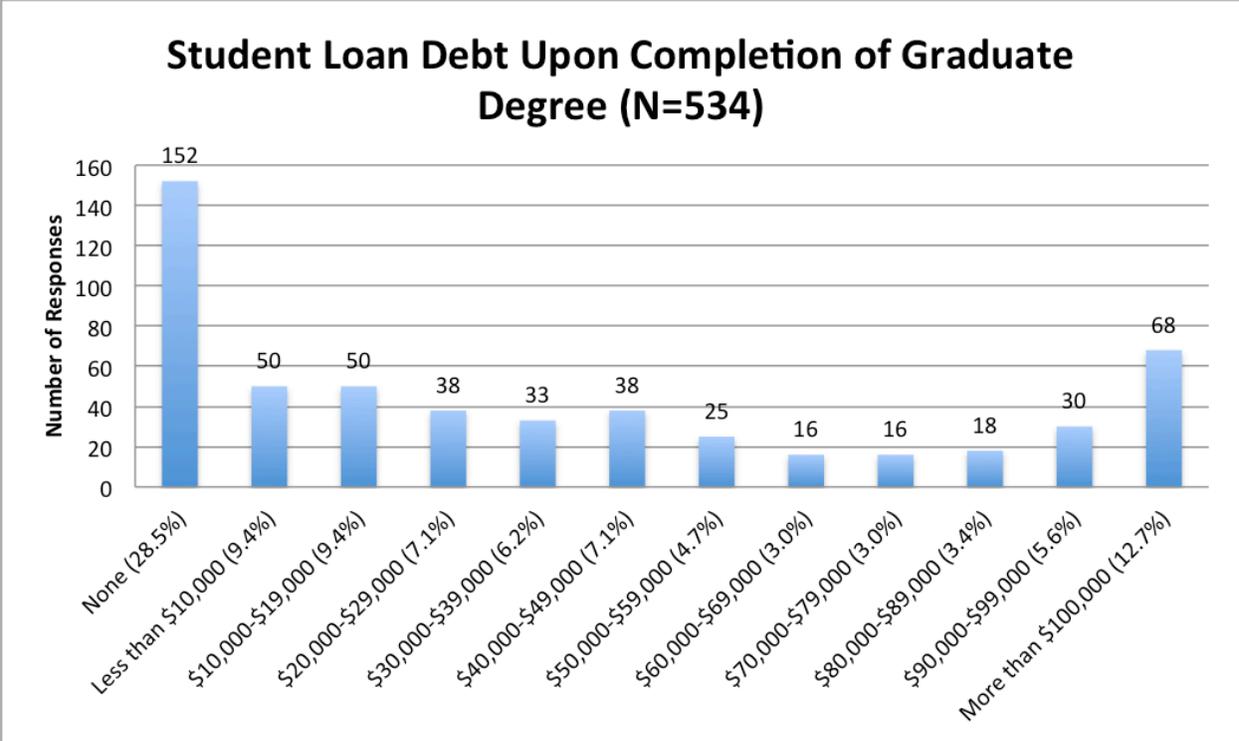
For the 382 (61.5% of all survey respondents) graduate students who reported expected student loan debt upon graduation, expected debt ranges from less than \$10,000 to more than \$100,000. Expected debt from student loans is represented in Figure 7.



**Figure 6.** PhD students who plan to go on the job market as an ABD (N=429)

**Table 8.** Graduate students' financial obligations upon completion of graduate degree

Financial Obligation	Response Count	Percent of all Respondents (N=621)
Student loan debt	345	55.6%
Credit card debt	244	39.3%
Car payment(s)	183	29.5%
Mortgage(s)	147	23.7%
Other loans	52	8.4%
<i>Skipped question</i>	158	25.4%



**Figure 7.** Expected student loan debt upon completion of graduate degree (N=534)

## What Resources Graduate Students Have Available: Other Professional Organizations and Professional Preparation for Conferences from Local Institutions

This section overviews two types of resources graduate students already have available:

- 1) Graduate students are members of a variety of other professional organizations and join for the benefits of being members of those organizations, such as presentation experience, job networking, reduced conference costs, pedagogical development, and more.
- 2) Approximately 3 out of 5 graduate students receive some sort of professional support for creating effective conference presentations or conference proposals. Only two-fifths of respondents reported having support for turning conference presentations into publications.

### Professional Memberships

Graduate Students belong to a wide variety of other professional organizations. Over two-fifths of respondents were members of Rhetoric Society of America (RSA) and the Modern Language Association (MLA). Table 9 lists the professional organizations that at least six respondents are members of.

**Table 9.** Respondents' membership in professional organizations (N=441)

Professional Organization	Number	Percent
Rhetoric Society of America (RSA)	192	43.5%
Modern Language Association (MLA)	178	40.4%
Council of Writing Program Administrators (CWPA)	96	21.8%
Association of Teachers of Technical Writing (ATTW)	58	13.2%
Two-Year College Association (TYCA)	53	12.0%
Society for Technical Communication (STC)	28	6.3%
Council on Basic Writing (CBW)	14	3.2%
Association of Writers and Writing Programs (AWP)	9	2.0%
Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)	9	2.0%
Council of Women Scholars in the History of Rhetoric and Composition (CWSHRC)	7	1.6%
College English Association (CEA)	7	1.6%
National Communication Association (NCA)	7	1.6%
Popular Culture Association (PCA)	7	1.6%
American Association of Applied Linguistics (AAAL)	6	1.4%
Council for Programs in Technical and Scientific Communication (CPTSC)	6	1.4%

Respondents were members of another 89 professional organizations at the international, national, regional, and state level, in much smaller numbers (between 1 and 5 individuals reporting being a member of each of these organizations).

Graduate students had a variety of reasons for joining these professional organizations, listed in Table 10. The top reasons were related to conferences, developing as a teacher, and networking for jobs.

**Table 10.** Reasons why graduate students joined professional organizations (N=482)

Reasons	Number	Percent
Presentation experience	284	54.9%
Reduced conference registration cost	277	57.5%
Job networking	276	57.3%
Pedagogical development	273	56.6%
Research opportunities	180	37.3%
Funding opportunities (travel, scholarship)	128	26.6%
Caucus membership	30	6.2%
<i>Other reasons given</i>		
Alignment with interests or identity, Conversations with colleagues, Staying up-to-date in the field	15	3.1%
Access to journals or other published scholarship	13	2.7%
Other networking (develop community, socializing, listservs, special interest groups)	7	1.5%
Required in order to attend a conference	6	1.2%
Felt it was a duty or a part of professionalization	4	0.8%
Opportunities for service	3	0.6%

### Professional Development Support Related to Conferences from Local Institutions

About 3 in 5 respondents reported that they had discussions or sessions on effective conference presentations within their local department; roughly the same amount reported having conference proposal workshops or discussions of proposal writing strategies in their department. A smaller portion of respondents, 2 out of 5, reported the presence of support in their department for turning conference presentations into publications. This information is summarized in Table 11.

Respondents mentioned a variety of other types of support in write-in responses, including practice presentations with feedback from peers and faculty; unofficial brainstorming sessions; a course that helps students develop publications; and informal one-on-one support from faculty. Fifteen participants explicitly

wrote “none” for the write-in option, but we might assume that many of the 160 respondents who skipped this question received none of these types of support.

**Table 11.** Types of support available to graduate students from their departments (N=461)

Type of Support	Number	Percent
Discussions or sessions on effective conference presentations	290	62.9%
Conference proposal workshops or discussions of proposal writing strategies	299	64.9%
Support for turning conference presentations into publications	200	43.4%

## Graduate Students' Current Knowledge of CCCC, Its Leadership Structure, and Its Subcommittees

Overall, graduate students have a lack of knowledge of the infrastructure of CCCC and the function and responsibilities of the Executive Committee and its subcommittees, but many would be interested in becoming involved or learning about the leadership structure.

We asked respondents about their knowledge about the CCCC Executive Committee regarding its functions and operations, how it reports to members, and its responsibility to membership, as well as about their knowledge of subcommittees and their functions and operations, how they represent membership, and their responsibility to members. We asked them to respond to statements about their knowledge on a 5-point Likert scale. Table 12 on the next page represents survey responses. For each statement about being knowledgeable, roughly 70% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. These figures show that graduate students are not very knowledgeable about the leadership and committee structure of CCCC.

In a follow-up question, we asked respondents to further describe what they would like to understand better regarding the administration functions of CCCC, the Executive Committee, and/or subcommittees of the Executive Committee. 182 Respondents followed up with comments.

In general, many graduate students have little knowledge of how CCCC administration functions, or what CCCC does outside of hold a conference and publish a journal. Numerous respondents simply wrote that they would like to know “everything,” implying a vast lack of knowledge. A few stressed that they were sure information might be available online, but that lack of time has prevented them from researching on their own. Respondents' lack of knowledge is exemplified in comments that suggest that CCCC's leadership structure is so foreign to them that they don't know where to begin to ask questions: “I know so little about it, I'm not sure I can answer this [question] with any certainty.”

Of course, not all graduate students care to understand the structure of CCCC leadership. Some respondents expressed disinterest, such as one who wrote, “As long as it runs, I don't care.” Others expressed that they are busy “working and going to school” and that their lack of knowledge is “not a problem with CCCC.”

Graduate students expressed desire to know the following:

- *How the Executive Committee is elected.* While some knew there was a ballot process, many were not sure if members of the EC were elected or appointment, and how.
- *What exactly the Executive Committee does (its roles and functions).* Some knew that the CCCC Chair gives the address at the conference, but beyond that, there was little understanding of what the EC does, or if it even does, in one respondent's words “meaningful things.”
- *The administrative structure of CCCC.*
- *How proposals for the conference are judged, and who judges them.* This process seemed unclear to many respondents.
- *How leadership is chosen to reflect diversity, especially in regards to race and sexuality.*
- *What subcommittees there are, what they do, and who they're responsible to.* Some expressed that they weren't even aware that there are subcommittees. Some understood that these subcommittees had roles in creating documents like the Students' Rights to Their Own Language, but they were unsure of how

these documents are formed. Respondents expressed uncertainty or curiosity about what actual effects the subcommittees have on the field or organization.

- *How subcommittees are formed and how members of subcommittees are chosen.* How members are selected was important knowledge to some respondents, who expressed suspicion that members are selected through “seemingly nepotistic requirements” and that “the only way to get on a committee is to know someone on them to get nominated.” Some expressed frustration that “even when you volunteer repeatedly for committees and to help the Cs, no one ever contacts you.”
- *How caucuses and special interest groups are formed and organized, what their purposes are, and how one becomes involved.*

**Table 12.** Graduate students’ knowledge of the CCCC Executive Committee and its subcommittees

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Rating Average	Number of Respondents
<b>I believe I’m knowledgeable about what the CCCC Executive Committee is, and about its functions and general operations.</b>	19.8% (112)	43.9% (248)	15.9% (90)	18.6% (105)	1.8% (10)	2.39	565
<b>I believe I’m knowledgeable about how the CCCC Executive Committee reports and represents CCCC members.</b>	22.1% (124)	47.7% (268)	16.4% (92)	12.3% (69)	1.6% (9)	2.24	562
<b>I believe I’m knowledgeable about the CCCC Executive Committee’s responsibilities to CCCC and to its members.</b>	23.0% (129)	46.1% (259)	16.9% (95)	12.5% (70)	1.6% (9)	2.24	562
<b>I believe I’m knowledgeable about what subcommittees to the CCCC Executive Committee are, and about their functions and general operations.</b>	23.7% (133)	48.6% (273)	16.7% (94)	10.3% (58)	0.7% (4)	2.16	562
<b>I believe I’m knowledgeable about how subcommittees to the CCCC Executive Committee report and represent CCCC members.</b>	24.6% (139)	49.3% (278)	17.7% (100)	7.6% (43)	0.7% (4)	2.10	564
<b>I believe I’m knowledgeable about the CCCC Executive Committee subcommittees’ responsibilities to CCCC and to its members.</b>	24.5% (138)	49.7% (280)	17.2% (97)	7.8% (44)	0.7% (4)	2.10	563

A few graduate students made suggestions for transparency and information circulation. Here are some representative suggestions:

*“I think more frequent and more concerted efforts to be transparent in all aspects of the 4C committees is important. Understanding how to participate as a Stage I and II reviewer might also be a part of making the work of 4C more transparent. It wasn’t until I was a 5<sup>th</sup> year doctoral student who presented at 4C 5 times when the process of reviewing selection was made clear to me. Further, I think it would be in the 4C’s best interest to make proposal reviewer comments open to those who propose papers, sessions, workshops, etc. NCA does this and it might make the process more transparent.”*

*“I think there could be some well-circulated visual or chart that shows the relationships between the Executive Committee, the subcommittees, the wider NCTE organization, etc. I could see the chart being discussed in graduate classes, posted on walls, and made a part of the conversation at conferences and in graduate programs and the field at large.”*

*“Maybe this information could be printed in the conference program.”*

*“Maybe an email or insert in a mailer when you first join the organization that includes a leadership tree illustrating these committees and their functions as well as how the members are selected, who they report to, and how their agendas are decided.”*

## Support Graduate Students Need: Involvement in CCCC, Travel Funding Difficulties, Assistance on the Job Market, and Other Professional Development

Graduate students expressed desires for a variety of opportunities to get involved with CCCC, both at the conference and outside the conference as well. They also expressed desires for CCCC to assist in professional development. This section begins by overviewing some of the opportunities that graduate students expressed interest in, and then focuses on 4 areas of need or support in more depth: 1) travel funding, 2) the job market, 3) mentorship, and 4) graduate student labor conditions.

Graduate students are eager to become involved in CCCC, but are often unsure how, or don't see the process as transparent (see the discussion of their understanding of CCCC subcommittees above). For some, the process for becoming involved seems exclusive, granted to graduate students in certain programs over others. Many expressed this desire to become involved:

*"I am very interested in becoming more involved with CCCC but I'm unsure how or where to begin."*

*"I'm curious about how the CCCC and others view programs. It seems like often the only graduate students who are given opportunities come from the 'flagship' programs. I wonder if we are ignoring very qualified students who don't hold a certain pedigree."*

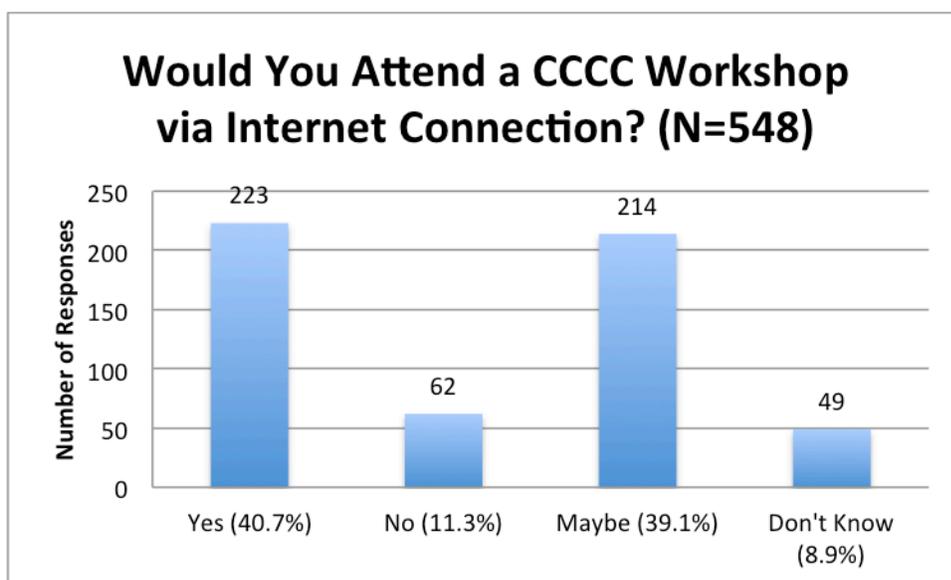
We asked what opportunities graduate students would be interested in. Responses are listed in Tables 13 and 14. Respondents expressed strong interest in local chapters of CCCC, listserv participation, serving as a conference proposal review, social media discussion forums, opportunities for mentorship, serving on subcommittees, web seminars, caucus membership, workshops on revising presentations into publications, writing support groups, job fairs, a wellness booth for graduate students at the conference, and workshops on applying to PhD programs. Figure 8 shows that there is also interest in attending workshops via the Internet in lieu of at the conference itself.

**Table 13.** What other ways of engaging in the CCCC organization (beyond attending the convention) would you be interested in? (N=505)

Activity	Number	Percent
Local chapters of CCCC	292	57.8%
Listserv participation	275	54.5%
Conference proposals reviewer	243	48.1%
Social media discussion forums	239	47.3%
Mentorship	225	44.6%
Subcommittee membership	196	38.8%
Web seminars	186	36.8%
Caucus Membership	125	24.8%

**Table 14.** What other events or opportunities would you like to see at the convention? (N=520)

Event or Opportunity	Number	Percent
Workshops on revising convention presentations into publications	412	79.2%
Dissertation and thesis support groups	353	67.9%
Job Fair	317	61.0%
Individual Mentoring	283	54.4%
Writing boot camps	254	48.8%
Grad student wellness booth	210	40.4%
Workshops on applying to PhD programs	157	30.2%



**Figure 8.** Graduate students' interest in a workshop via Internet connection (N=548)

The following discussion focus on 4 areas of need or support for graduate students: 1) travel funding, 2) support on the job market, 3) mentorship, and 4) graduate student labor conditions. This section of the report closes with a list of other potential opportunities that graduate students mentioned.

### Travel Funding

Graduate students feel pressure to attend conferences for a variety of reasons: They understand that attending is good for networking, keeping up-to-date with research and scholarship, and testing out ideas. Importantly, attending conferences also helps on the job market, as conference presentations are lines on a CV that show scholarship activity. As one graduate student wrote, conferences are “a financial burden, and it’s a real problem because attending conferences is an expected and necessary part of professional development.”

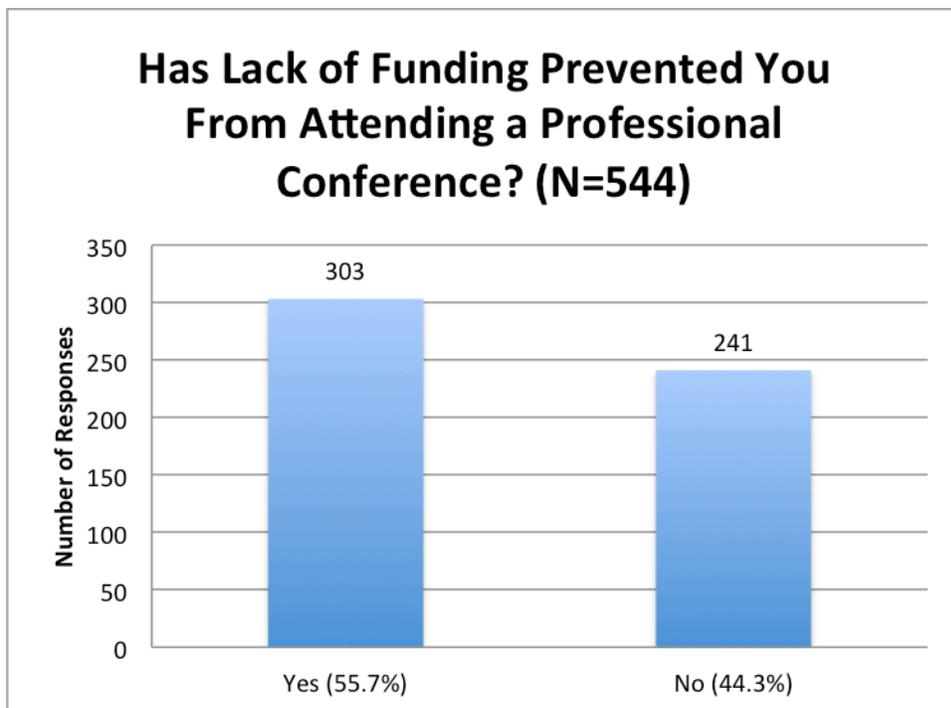
Our survey shows that while a strong majority of graduate students report having funding available for conference travel from their local departments or institutions, that funding may not be that helpful or too accessible, for a variety of reasons: Funding may be low, competitive, or distributed differently based on graduate student status, or may involve application processes that are difficult or not transparent. Additionally, reimbursement processes are sometimes slow and cause financial hardship. Many take on credit card debt or other debt in order to pay for travel.

The majority (over 90%) of respondents have funding available from their institution for attending professional conferences, though there is a wide range in the amount of funding provided. Two-fifths of respondents reported that between \$200 and \$499 is available to attend a professional conference, and another two-fifths receive over \$500. Our survey question did not ask if this funding was available for multiple conferences, or just for one conference per year, an issue that becomes clearer below. Additionally, this is available funding, and later responses show that this funding might have been available through competition, meaning that while the institution made it available, graduate students did not necessarily have access to it. Table 15 represents the amount of funding available to graduate students for conference travel from their department or institution.

Over half of respondents reported that a lack of funding prevented them from attending a conference, as shown in Figure 9.

**Table 15.** Amount of funding available to graduate students for conference travel (from their department or institution) (N=523)

Funding Amount	Number	Percent
\$800 or greater	78	14.9%
\$500 to \$799	130	24.9%
\$200 to \$499	209	40.0%
\$199 or less	56	10.7%
No funding	50	9.6%



**Figure 9.** Lack of funding has prevented over half of respondents from attending a conference (N=544)

Graduate students' write-in explanations of why financial costs have prevented them from attending conferences provide some insight into the difficulty of affording such travel. Many explained that their department or institution only supports one conference a year or that travel support was competitive. Some graduate students have to prioritize conferences based on location because of flight costs; quite a few responses expressed that they restrict conferences to locations within driving distance. Numerous of the respondents had decided to not submit a proposal because they knew the conference was out of their budget.

*Funding from departments and institutions is often difficult to receive, not transparent, or involves slow reimbursement processes, discouraging graduate students from applying for or using the funds. Some funds are "first come first serve" and so "run out pretty fast. And by the time we know that we've been accepted to a conference, it is sometimes too late to get funding to travel there."* The reimbursement methods at institutions can also be an impediment to traveling for students. For example, one respondent wrote:

*Even when I do have funding, the reimbursement process is so cumbersome and slow at my institution (it once took 7 months for me to get reimbursed for a conference I attended overseas) I have to think carefully about attending conferences, period. I frequently end up paying interest on my credit card for conference expenses for several months, and I'm never reimbursed for that.*

Others have decided not to attend conferences for fears that the reimbursement wouldn't go through.

*Funding is also not distributed evenly within an institution. Some graduate students reported that their department only offers funding to students who have shown progress. Some programs only provide funding after a student becomes a PhD Candidate; one respondent wrote:*

*I would say this money supports professional codification and not development. You get money when your dissertation research is presentable (though it isn't tied to the research explicitly). You do not get money to develop as a scholar before you have dove into your dissertation research.*

Others explained that first-year MA students are not eligible for travel funding, or that travel funding is available for different amounts based on how far along one is in the program. For some, funding was guaranteed the first two years, but became competitive after that.

*Funding applications for graduate students can also be difficult, or the process might not be transparent.* One graduate student wrote, “The grant application process is too tortuous and time-consuming. It has been suggested that we ‘panhandle’ to raise conference funding, which I would never do.” Others complained that the funding process at their institution was not transparent. For example, “The mechanisms might be more visible. I know they exist because other people seem to get funding, but I don’t know how to go about doing that myself.”

*Stipend amounts and personal costs are also at play.* Some graduate students are living off a small stipend and supporting a family, and some go without health insurance. One graduate student wrote, “On a \$9000/year stipend, there isn’t much travel money left (there isn’t much money left in general).”

Because graduate students see conferences as important for their scholarly activity and professional development, *they often pay out of pocket, take out loans, or go in credit card debt.* One respondent explained, “I spent over \$1,000 in travel, hotel expenses, and food in two conferences one year. I don't have that much money to spend all on my own. My school only reimbursed me for 200 dollars of it.”

A repeated theme was that funding was only available if students were presenting. Many expressed the desire to attend a conference to develop professionally, but could not because no funding was available if they were not presenting.

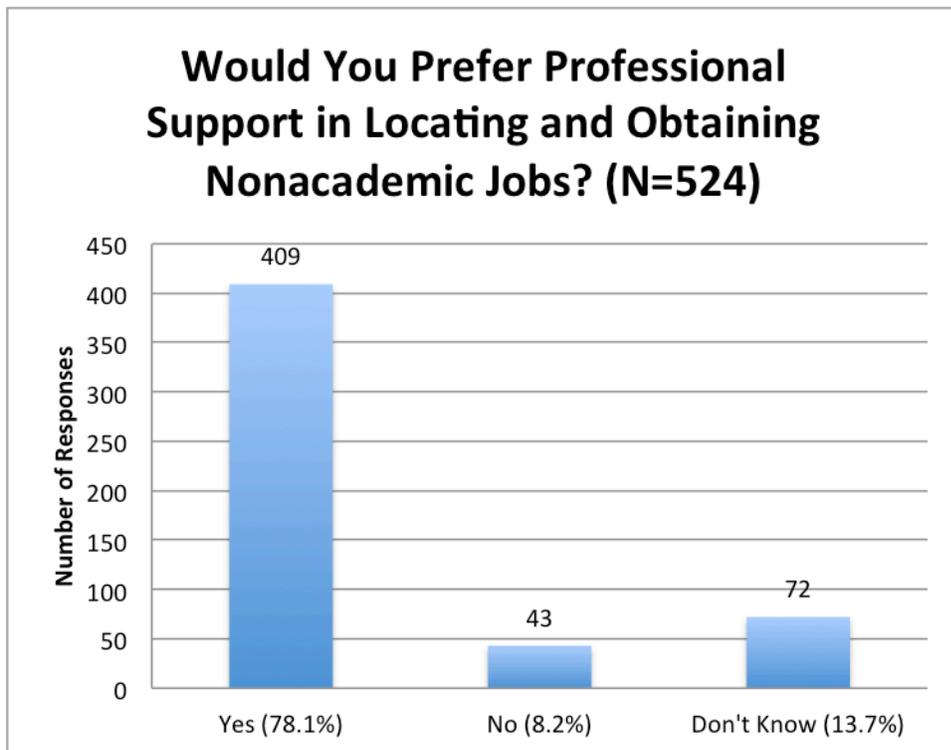
Respondents were excited to see a growing number of awards for graduate students (including references to the new travel scholarships for LGBT scholars provided by CCCC), but would like to see more funding opportunities for graduate students to attend the conference.

## **Assistance on the Job Market**

We asked what sort of help would graduate students like from CCCC regarding the job search; 284 participants responded, suggesting support in two areas: navigating and finding nonacademic jobs, and assistance with the academic job search.

### Nonacademic Job Searches

Nonacademic job prospects are becoming increasingly important to graduate students in our field (see the discussion of graduate students’ career goals above). Over three-quarters of all respondents to the survey reported that they would like to see support in locating and obtaining nonacademic jobs (see Figure 10).



**Figure 10.** Graduate student interest in support in locating and obtaining nonacademic jobs (N=524)

In response to our open-ended question, 59 respondents explicitly mentioned the nonacademic job market and wanting assistance in finding jobs and understanding what sorts of jobs are good matches for those with advanced degrees in rhetoric and composition. Those who expressed this desire for assistance in the nonacademic job search often expressed that there was little support at their institution because their graduate programs often emphasized academic job preparation. Graduate students expressed the desire for access to job lists or assistance in finding job ads, mentoring from those in the field who pursued nonacademic jobs, networking opportunities in industry (publishing, technical communication, writing, editing), and advice on translating academic skills into industry- or business-related skills.

Some representative responses follow:

*“Figuring out what outside of academia I would be qualified for (especially in regards to nonprofits or the publication industry)”*

*“I wound up with a tenure-track research job, but I did want to explore non-academic options when finishing my PhD last year. Advice and assistance were not obtainable at my institution, however, and trying to navigate those possibilities on my own was very difficult.”*

*“Resources on nonacademic jobs that rhet/comp graduates have pursued and/ or access to them for mentoring/ advice”*

*“It would be nice for my university, and/ or the field’s professional organizations, to acknowledge and de-stigmatize the option of looking beyond academia for employment. There’s so little information out there about ‘what else’ comp/ rhet PhDs can do, and yet, surely not all comp/ rhet PhDs are in academic jobs. What are our options? How might we*

*attain different positions? . . . When you ask programs to think about alternatives [to academic jobs], they have little, if any, information to offer. The reality is that most grads will not end up with a TT job, especially at an R1 university, and yet most of us receive our degrees from R1 universities, where professors know nothing else and cannot imagine working outside of such a system. . . . I'm very interested in working outside of academia, but it's hard to know where to start."*

*"I don't even know where to look for non-academic jobs, so having a database or workshops on 'alt-ac' employment would be really useful."*

*"It would be nice to learn what one might do with a PhD in Rhet/Comp besides teach, research, or administer a program."*

### Academic Job Searches

Those who wanted assistance on the academic job search expressed desire for a variety of types of assistance. The three most common requests related to 1) networking and mentorship; 2) workshops related to the application process; and 3) better access to a list of job ads. This subsection closes with a list of other requests or suggestions respondents made.

#### 1) Networking and Mentorship

Mentorship was a common theme among respondents. As Tables 13 and 14 above show, roughly half of our respondents would be interested in mentorship from CCCC members. In response to our open-ended question, many respondents mentioned desiring networking opportunities or mentorship opportunities, specifically desiring mentors or networking opportunities outside of their own institution. One graduate student asked, "How does one create a network outside of one's institution besides the obvious, i.e., attending conferences?" Graduate students were particularly interested in mentorship from others in the field who could provide perspective or insights into the field, job market, and teaching.

*"Honest mentorship from someone who can speak to the drawbacks of different kinds of positions and sectors relating to teaching and literacy"*

*"I am only one of two people in rhet/comp on the job market this year so there is not a job market cohort available at my school."*

Mentorship more broadly will be discussed more below in the section on mentorship.

#### 2) Workshops Related to the Application Process

Many respondents were interested in some sort of workshop, panel, or forum on the academic job market. Some requests were for broadly conceived workshops on the job market; others were requests for help with specific aspects of the job market. Respondents listed the following desired opportunities:

- A workshop or session on the job market (in general, with no specifics): **15**
- A workshop, feedback, or review session on application materials and documents: **33**
- A workshop on interview skills or the interview process: **21**

- A workshop on the CV specifically: **16**
- Information on or a workshop on understanding salaries and negotiating salaries: **2**
- Information on less-often requested materials: **2**
- Coaching or advice on job talks: **2**

Some respondents had suggestions from their experiences at other conferences, including the Modern Language Association and the Association of Teachers of Technical Writing:

*At the 2013 MLA conference, there was a helpful panel that facilitated discussion about the job market. More of those types of discussions in which job search committee members share their views would be helpful.*

*I've found the job fair ATTW holds every year to be highly informative, and generally helpful. It's nice to put faces and people to abstract notions of 'job markets.'*

*I hope the CCCC could set up a side-event or workshop like the RNF that is specifically designed to help graduate students prepare for the market. Such a group might have to sub-divide by professional needs/goals (terminal MA vs. PhD; admin vs. faculty, etc.) in order to effectively help people. Otherwise, the workshops might have to remain very general and they would be less helpful.*

(ATTW holds a “speed dating” style event where graduate students meet with faculty who share information about their program and suggestions about the job market.)

While most requests for workshops or other assistance with the job market were brief, one respondent pointed out the difficulty of being on the job market and managing difference:

*I have a TT job now at an R1 institution. However, as a graduate student, I found the conversation surrounding the job market and disability access to be incredibly lacking. Every time a “we love skype interviews!!” thread surfaces on the WPA, I die a little inside. . . . Seeking accommodations as a job candidate is a highly precarious situation to begin with: seeking them for a skype interview . . . only reinforces the idea that disabled candidates cost more . . . and pose unreasonable hardships on universities. Knowing how or when to disclose is highly vexed, and I think this goes beyond disability and stretches into sexual orientation and other marginalized groups. I made the decision to come out in my cover letter. I'm certain I missed a lot of job opportunities because of that.*

### 3) Better Access to a List of Job Ads, Help Finding Jobs Ads, and Advice on Interpreting Jobs

While respondents understood that there are some centralized mechanisms to finding job searches (the MLA Job Information List, Jim Ridolfo’s Rhetmap.org, and the Jobs Wiki), they also expressed frustrations at how distributed mechanisms for advertising jobs are becoming (more departments going to other sites to advertise, or advertising on a variety of listservs). Twenty-three (23) respondents mentioned a desire for a listserv or centralized place to access job ads in the field, whether a website or a listserv. Seven (7) mentioned assistance in understanding and interpreting job ads, especially for how to understand teaching loads, research expectations, and how and if one is a good fit for a job.

Here are a few representative comments:

*Jobs in our field are on so many different listservs and sites, it's hard to keep them all straight. I had to go through multiple sites each day to find jobs in comp/ rhet, tech comm, digital writing, etc.*

*A job database that is more extensive than MLA's. There are many 'invisible' opportunities not listed.*

*I'd like to see a job database, like that of MLA, specific to Rhetoric, Composition, and Technical Communication.*

#### 4) Other Requests or Suggestions from Respondents Regarding the Academic Job Search

Respondents made other requests or suggestions worth mentioning briefly:

- A workshop or other resources to receive feedback or advice on revising presentations into publication: **7**
- A job fair: **2**
- Counseling opportunities: **1**
- Advice or help with applications to PhD Programs: **1**
- Advocacy for ending the process of holding interviews at MLA: **1**
- Advocacy from tenured faculty to use their power and position to “fight to keep tenure-line jobs as tenure-line jobs”: **1**
- Development of a centralized clearing house for uploading application materials: **1**
- Assistance with online portfolio development: **1**
- Grant-writing workshops: **1**
- Workshops on assessment: **1**
- Job market advice for those who want to teach with an MA: **1**
- Assistance with the financial burden of the job market: **1**

### Mentorship

As shown in Tables 13 and 14 above, and revealed in the discussion of the job market, graduate students have a strong desire for mentorship through CCCC.

While the previous section stressed the desire of graduate students for mentorship at CCCC, a few respondents noted that another need is stronger mentorship at local institutions. Others expressed desire to become mentors themselves, or to expand the sort of professionalization to include a wider variety of opportunities (such as nonacademic jobs or community college teaching).

*I think perhaps a strategy to focus on mentoring faculty/ creating incentives for them to provide support and one-on-one mentoring to graduate students in their program could also be an interesting perspective/ approach to the issue. For example—I could see a CFP for faculty mentors and research related to it could crystalize and focus on strong graduate programs and encourage self-reflection on the varying/ hot and cold mentorship that can happen sometimes in the same department/ program.*

*As a recent PhD student who successfully (as it were) navigated the job market, how can I become a CCCC mentor?*

*I think it's really important that this committee push to raise awareness and professionalization around teaching English in two-year college settings. Even members of the field who will not be teaching in such settings should be aware of the distinctive teaching work and professional profiles of these faculty, both so that they can prepare their own future graduate students and so that they can be good colleagues to the two-year college membership of CCCC. I would be eager to participate in any efforts on the part of CCCC to fill what I think is an enormous gap in most rhet/comp programs.*

## Graduate Student Labor Conditions

While our survey did not ask about graduate student labor conditions, this concern came up numerous times in responses to various open-ended questions. Graduate students expressed the desire for understanding graduate student labor conditions and for CCCC to advocate on behalf of graduate students. Here are some representative comments:

*I would like to see the CCCC Committee on the Status of Graduate Students push to make workers' rights more a part of the conversations in our field. I mean this on multiple levels: on the level of making sure graduate students get the support they need without unreasonable workloads, yes, but also on the level of fighting ensure that austerity measures in higher education do not cheapen the job prospects of future graduates. It's an ethical responsibility we all have.*

*I would like to see an initiative for gathering data on the current state of GTA conditions: pay level, work load, support for degree completion, programs for fostering degree completion, faculty incentives for fostering degree completion.*

*I also think that attention to working conditions is also important—how many classes are graduate students teaching and taking? What are the material conditions of grad student offices/work spaces?*

## Other Mentioned Opportunities

Graduate students also expressed interest in other opportunities in write-in responses. Write-in responses mentioned the following opportunities or services:

- Reading CCCC materials (position statements, newsletters, etc.)
- A more dynamic and useful website
- Professional development for online teaching
- Mentoring or advice on successful conference proposals
- A space online (through not a listserv or CCCC forum) where graduate students can discuss issues (such as a Facebook page or blog site)
- A session for “more mature” graduate students, or graduate students with families
- Support for graduate students early in their programs
- Reducing the cost of membership for graduate students, or having a trial membership for initial access to online journal articles and resources
- Replacing the MLA job interview process with interviews at CCCC (admitting that this may be difficult due to the timing of the convention)
- A breakfast at the convention with speakers

## Conclusions and Recommendations

Our survey data suggests the following conclusions:

1. Graduate students are considering non-academic jobs, but do not have the support at their local institutions for finding job opportunities, connecting their degrees to nonacademic jobs, etc.
2. The academic job market is a mystifying process for graduate students, they often lack mentorship at their institutions, and CCCC could provide opportunities to assist graduate students in understanding and navigating the job market. Further, graduate students are concerned about issues of adjunct and contingent academic labor and working conditions.
3. Overwhelmingly, graduate students do not understand the CCCC leadership structure or how subcommittees work; further, some see involvement opportunities as unfairly distributed.
4. While local departments and institutions have travel money available to graduate students, this money is often not much, not accessible, given through processes that are not transparent, or distributed unevenly.
5. Graduate students are eager to get involved in CCCC opportunities but are often unsure how to do so.
6. Graduate students desire mentorship and networking opportunities from colleagues in our field who are not at their institutions.
7. We have little understanding of graduate student labor conditions.
8. If our survey respondents are representative of the field at large, racial and ethnic minorities are under-represented in our graduate student populace.

## Recommendations

Based on the results of this survey and our conclusions, we have the following recommendations:

### 1. Reconstitute the Committee on the Status of Graduate Students in the spring.

1A. Charge the Committee with researching labor conditions of graduate students.

1B. Charge the Committee with drafting a position statement on best practices for departments supporting graduate students and providing professional development (e.g., mentorship, the job market, travel funding). This statement might, among other recommendations, encourage transparency in travel funding opportunities and suggest best practices for mentorship on the job market.

1C. Charge the Committee with researching faculty perceptions, experiences, and expectations working with graduate students. The data from our survey shows that there seems to be a disconnect between graduate student needs and the support available in pretty significant areas (mentorship, understanding the job market, etc.), areas that are important for the future and lively existence of the field (especially when some graduate students are looking at jobs outside of the field or academia altogether). Researching faculty perceptions and experiences could provide a clearer picture of what support is available and missing for graduate students.

We also recommend that the Committee on the Status of Graduate Students builds stronger, future alliances with the following committees to ensure that graduate student concerns about labor practices, racial diversity

and inclusion, LGBTQ concerns, accessibility and inclusion related to disability, and being new to the CCCC Convention are addressed:

- the Committee on Part-time, Adjunct or Contingent Labor (which is charged with researching working conditions and labor practices)
- the Committee on Diversity (which is charged, in part, with “promot[ing] the recruiting and retention of graduate students of color into rhetoric & writing graduate programs and to advocate for diversity-rich graduate curricula”)
- the Committee on Disability Issues
- the Committee on LGBTQ Issues
- the Newcomers’ Orientation Committee
- the Task Force on Hiring Practices

## 2. Continue the work begun by Joyce Carter on making the process of CCCC program development and proposal review more transparent.

Joyce Carter’s YouTube videos have circulated widely amongst members of CCCC on various social networks, and have made the review process much more transparent to members who were not aware of how these processes work. However, more transparency would be helpful for graduate students.

2A. Develop an informational guide about the structure of CCCC leadership and opportunities. This could take the form of an informational flow chart that is available on the website, printed in the conference program in the future, and potentially mailed out or emailed out to new members.

2B. Revise the proposal review process to make reviewer comments available to proposal submitters. We know Joyce Carter was considering this option for the 2015 conference, but did not feel it was fair to reviewers who believed their comments would not be shared. Sharing reviewer comments can make acceptances and rejections more transparent, and hopefully provide guidance to graduate students for writing proposals in the future.

## 3. Develop a workshop or other forum for support and professional development for the academic job market.

This workshop or forum could take a variety of formats, depending on the resources of CCCC. The Rhetoric Society of America (RSA) has set a precedent of holding webinars on certainly scholarly topics; a webinar series might be one approach to providing this sort of professional development. The Association of Teachers of Technical Writing holds a short “speed dating” style session in which graduate students briefly meet faculty and discuss the job market and receive advice.

The Executive Committee could consider a similar or more comprehensive workshop or forum. The 2015 Conference includes the afternoon workshop AW.11: “The Job, not Just the Job Market: Preparing for Professional Life in Composition & Rhetoric,” which is a wonderful step in providing this of professional development. The Executive Committee might consider making a workshop like this standing for every convention, or working to advocate that similar workshops are proposed in the future. We recommend that

professional development related to the job market also include mentorship regarding differences along the axes of gender, race, sexuality, class, and ability.

#### 4. Formalize some mentoring and networking opportunities for graduate students and develop faculty mentorship opportunities.

Formalized mentoring and networking opportunities could take a variety of formats. One possibility is a mentorship meet and greet. Members of the Committee on the Status of Graduate Students have begun this process by working to host a CCCC Grad Meet, Greet, and Learn. We will invite all grad students (including recently post grad, first-timers, contingent faculty, junior faculty) to meet up with other grad students and faculty for a short, structured meet and greet session (possibly over food or coffee).

One of our committee's priorities has been to increase mentoring support and networking opportunities for graduate students at the CCCC Conventions. We believe in the value of *intentional interactions* between first-timers and seasoned attendees, between new and advanced graduate students, and between graduate students and faculty with shared interests. We will ask several “mentor” participants to select sessions to attend directly following the meet and greet. Near the end of the meet and greet, attendees will be invited to select a group to go see a session with, where more informal mentoring, discussion, info exchanging can happen.

The Executive Committee can support this event by encouraging faculty participation in this event and providing financial support for food and beverages. This event, or other mentoring events, will need to be institutionalized so that they can be developed, improved, and supported in the future.

Developing faculty mentors is also an important aspect of this recommendation. As noted in our discussion on mentorship above, some graduate students expressed a need for stronger mentorship at their local institutions. The workshop MW.16 “Visible Futures: Building Success Beyond the Curriculum in Rhetoric & Writing Graduate Programs” at the 2015 Convention is an excellent opportunity for CCCC to support developing mentorship at local institutions. Finding ways to continue the development of faculty as advisors and mentors to graduate students at their local institutions will be important to the continued development of graduate students.

#### 5. Develop a workshop or other forum for support on nonacademic careers and networking.

Similar to Recommendation 3 above, this support could take a variety of formats. We recommend encouraging applications for workshops related to nonacademic careers for the 2016 Convention, holding a featured session or similar event at the 2016 Convention, setting up a webinar outside of the Convention, or a developing another forum to provide support for graduate student in considering how their degrees can prepare them for nonacademic careers and what careers might be available to them.

## Appendix: Survey Questions

**1. What is your current status? [Please select all that apply.]**

- Graduate Student (MA)
- Graduate Student (PhD)
- Graduate Student (PhD Candidate)
- Other (please specify)

**2. Please identify your department or graduate program. [Please select all that apply.]**

- Rhetoric and Composition
- Communication
- Literature
- Creative Writing
- Philosophy
- Education
- Other (please specify)

**3. What *type* of graduate program are/were you currently/recently enrolled in:**

- MA-only granting
- MA and PhD granting
- other (please specify)

**4. Approximately how many students are in your cohort in your program (that is, students who are expected to graduate when you do)?**

**5. What kind of financial graduate support have you had or do you expect to have throughout your graduate school career? [Please select all that apply.]**

- Teaching Assistantship
- Research Assistantship
- Administrative Assistantship
- Fellowship Funding
- Writing Center
- No Funding
- Other (please specify)

**6. Please identify your gender. [Please select all that apply.]**

- Female
- Male
- Other
- Prefer not to Answer

**7. Do you identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender?**

- Yes
- No
- Prefer Not to Answer

**8. Please identify your race or ethnicity. [Please select all that apply.]**

- Hispanic or Latino
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White
- Other
- Prefer Not to Answer

**9. Do you identify as a person with a disability?**

- Yes
- No
- Prefer Not to Answer

**10. Please identify your age.**

- 21-25
- 26-30
- 31-35
- 36-40
- 41-45
- 46-50
- 51+
- Prefer Not to Answer

**11. Are you currently a member of the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC)?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

**12. What other professional organizations are you a member of? [Please select all that apply.]**

- RSA (Rhetoric Society of America)
- MLA (Modern Language Association)
- CWPA (Council of Writing Program Administrators)
- ATTW (Association of Teachers of Technical Writing)
- STC (Society for Technical Communication)
- TYCA (Two-Year College Association)
- IWCA (International Writing Centers Association)
- CBW (Council on Basic Writing)
- Other (please specify)

**13. Why did you choose to become a member of the organizations you noted above? [Please select all that apply.]**

- Reduced conference registration cost
- Pedagogical development
- Job Networking
- Research Opportunities
- Presentation Experience
- Caucus Membership
- Funding possibilities (travel, scholarship)
- Other

**14. Have you ever been accepted to present at the annual Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC)?**

- Yes I have been accepted, and I have presented at the conference.
- Yes I have been accepted, but I have not presented at the conference.
- No, I have not been accepted, but I have attended the conference.
- No, I have not been accepted, and I have not attended the conference.

**15. For each of the following statements, please rank the degree to which you agree/disagree, according to the scale provided. [5-point Likert scale]**

- I believe I'm knowledgeable about what the CCCC Executive Committee is, and about its functions, and general operations.
- I believe I'm knowledgeable about how the CCCC Executive Committee reports and represents CCCC members.
- I believe I'm knowledgeable about the CCCC Executive Committee's responsibilities to the CCCC and to its members.
- I believe I'm knowledgeable about what subcommittees to the CCCC Executive Committee are, and about their functions and general operations.
- I believe I'm knowledgeable about how subcommittees to the CCCC Executive Committee report and represent CCCC members.
- I believe I'm knowledgeable about the CCCC Executive Committee Subcommittees' responsibilities to the CCCC and to its members.

**Please describe what you would like to understand better, regarding the administrative function of CCCC, the Executive Committee, and/or Subcommittees of the Executive Committee.**

**16. Which of the following professional development support does your university, department, program, or faculty offer for conference presentations? [Please select all that apply.]**

- Discussions or sessions on effective conference presentations
- Conference proposal workshops or discussions of proposal writing strategies
- Support for turning conference presentations into publications
- Other (please specify)

**17. How much funding does your university, department, or program offer for conference travel each year?**

- \$800 or greater
- \$500-799
- \$200-\$499
- \$199 or less
- No funding

**18. Has lack of funding prevented you from attending a professional conference?**

- Yes
- No

**If your answer to the previous question is “Yes”, please elaborate.**

**19. What other ways of engaging in the CCCC organization (beyond attending the conference) would you be interested in? [Please select all that apply.]**

- list-serv participation
- social media discussion forums
- webinars
- subcommittee membership
- caucus membership
- conference proposals reviewer
- mentorship
- local chapters of CCCC
- Other (please specify)

**20. Would you attend a CCCC workshop via internet connection?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know
- Maybe

**21. Please check any of the following events or opportunities you would like to see at CCCC. What other events or opportunities would you like to see at CCCC?**

- job fair
- grad student wellness booth
- writing boot camps
- dissertation and thesis support groups
- workshops on applying to Phd programs
- workshops on revising conference presentations into publications
- individual mentoring opportunities

**22. What type of graduate degree (i.e. M.A., Ph.D.) do you plan to obtain, and why did you decide to pursue this graduate-level work?**

**23. What ongoing financial obligations will you have when you complete your graduate degree?**

**[Please select all that apply.]**

- Student loan debt
- Credit card debt
- Car payment(s)
- Mortgage(s)
- Other loans

**24. How much student loan debt do you expect to have when you complete your graduate degree?**

- Above \$100,000
- \$90,000-\$99,000
- \$80,000-\$89,000
- \$70,000-\$79,000
- \$60,000-\$69,000
- \$50,000-\$59,000
- \$40,000-\$49,000
- \$30,000-\$39,000
- \$20,000-\$29,000
- \$10,000-\$19,000
- Below \$10,000
- None

**25. What would be your ideal job after completing your graduate degree? [Please select all that apply.]**

- Higher education
- Secondary, middle, or elementary education
- Industry, Business or Corporation
- Industry, Government
- Industry, Nonprofit Sector
- Entrepreneur, Develop your own business
- Consulting
- Creative
- Other (please specify)

**26. If your preferred job is within higher education, what are your priorities? [Please select all that apply.]**

- Tenure track, Research institution
- Tenure track, Liberal arts college
- Community College, Two-Year College
- Non-Tenure Teaching
- Administrative, WPA, WAC, Writing Center, etc.
- Location-based priorities

Other

**27. Even if you are currently prioritizing academic jobs, would you prefer that professional support be available to assist you in locating and obtaining non-academic jobs?**

Yes

No

Don't Know

**28. What sort of help or support do you want or need in terms of finding or obtaining post-graduate employment?**

**29. If you are a PhD student, do you plan to go on the job market as an ABD (all-but-dissertation) candidate?**

Yes

No

Don't Know

**30. What salary expectations do you have after completing your graduate degree?**

Above \$100,000/year

\$90,000-\$99,000/year

\$80,000-\$89,000/year

\$70,000-\$79,000/year

\$60,000-\$69,000/year

\$50,000-\$59,000/year

\$40,000-\$49,000/year

\$30,000-\$39,000/year

Below \$29,000/year

**31. What institution are you attending (or, have you recently graduated from)? (This question is optional.)**

**32. Do you have any other concerns, questions, or suggestions for the CCCC Committee on the Status of Graduate Students?**